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ABSTRACT

From 1948 to 1994, the Republic of South Africa (RSA) maintained 15 different departments of education and separate educational systems, signifying the inequality in educational opportunities throughout the era of apartheid. Even before the new democratic system of government ushered in with the 1994 elections, however, the possibility of establishing a community college system in the country had been explored. At a 1992 education conference, for example, it was recommended that South Africa's educational system be open to all and that there be flexibility between formal and non-formal training. Since tertiary institutions in the country had historically been designed to maintain a highly selective process in admitting students into the universities, the concept of open access community colleges was met with resistance from some of the leaders of higher education. With the opening of Funda Community College in fall 1995 as the first American-style community college in the RSA, however, the government has begun to take the concept of the colleges seriously. Currently, efforts are underway and legislation is in process to improve community college leadership and articulation; encourage partnerships with RSA universities and "technikons," or vocational schools; and define national standards. Finally, American colleges and universities can play a vital role in helping the RSA deal with issues related to establishing funding mechanisms, training teachers, adjusting institutional missions, and developing curricula. (TGI)

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Education Reform in South Africa: Preparing for Higher Education beyond Aparteid

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Paper presented at a conference on "Investing in South Africa" (Costa Mesa, CA, March 19, 1996).

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"Education Reform in South Africa: Preparing for Higher Education Beyond Apartheid"

The Republic of South Africa existed for more than 350 years under European rule and struggled through nearly five decades of legal segregation by race. Its people, particularly, its youth, have experienced and continue to experience far more severe problems than American youth and children can begin to conceptualize. What a traumatic experience it must be for these young people who were born in a state of oppression and must now prepare to live in a society, called "Democracy. How will they adjust when all they read about are the negative aspects of America's youth that sometime appear to be as insurmountable as apartheid? Afterall, it's the American model of democracy that the youth of South Africa look forward to emulating.

Located at the Southern tip of the African Continent penetrating into a confluence of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans this country, South Africa, covers a land area of approximately 471,445 square miles. This constitutes an area larger than the states of New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas combined. Since the 1994 democratic election the country has been divided into nine provinces, each having its own Provincial government, with strong ties to the national government. The population comprising Blacks, Coloreds, Indians, and Whites, is approximately 43 million people with an education level which reflects that the white population has a 99% literacy rate with Indians a rate of 80%; Coloreds a rate of 55%; and Blacks a rate of 45-50%. The literacy rate says it all.

Jan Von Riebeck left Amsterdam in 1651 and arrived on South African soil in 1652. Ostensibly, his mission was to establish a relay station for the array of sailors and merchant organizations traveling from Europe to India, Java, and Malaysia for the acquisition of spices and other goods for Europeans traders. However, his activities extended into developing relationships with the indigenous population. There have been problems of great racial magnitude ever since.

After years of wars with the indigenous people who were found occupying the land upon the arrival of the Europeans, a colonial concept of divide, conquer and rule was established by the Europeans.

By 1658 the Europeans had successfully amalgamated the slaves from the East and West Coasts of Africa. In addition, the Hottentots, who were found in the area upon their arrival, and the off springs of Europeans who had mated with indigenous woman, had been placed into an identifiable group that evolved as the coloreds of South Africa. The Europeans had also effectively oppressed the Indians and Malaysians who had often landed in the country as shipmates and free persons, seeking employment and new opportunities.

By 1834 the British had abolished the slave trade and the government of the Cape Colony had begun to establish opportunities for the people of color to participate in governmental operations. Coloreds, in fact, were established as voters in the Cape government, as were the Indians and Malaysians. This condition lasted until the Nationalist Party came into

power in 1948 and began to abolish all of the amenities of citizenship for all people except the white "Thoroughbreds".

The "Mixed Marriages and Immorality Acts of 1950" made sexual intercourse across racial lines illegal. The "Group Areas Act" placed people into geographical areas by race, hence the development of the "Homelands and Townships. The "Population Registration Act of 1950" forced the people of South Africa to be in possession of an identity card (or passes) which specified their race, hence assuring that people of different races would be confined to areas accordingly.

The "University Act of 1950" began providing for the development of universities throughout the Republic of South Africa by race. This movement established three universities for Africans, one for coloreds and one for Asians. This action, then, discontinued the practice of allowing people of color to attend the predominantly white universities of Cape Town and the Witwatersrand.

This process launched the development of educational institutions by race in all of the homelands and white territories of the Republic of South Africa. There were established separate university acts for each university; the establishment of technikons along racial lines; the development of teacher training colleges according to race and location; and the development of technical colleges, by race, to meet the skill development needs of the diverse population.

Having successfully classified people along racial lines; White, (Europeans' descendants); African, (Bantu or indigenous Black Africans); Colored (Mixed blood people); and Asian, (Descendants of India and Malaysia, primarily); all levels of education from primary to the university were established accordingly.

To facilitate the variety of educational efforts of the new government, there were established 15 different departments of education. The coloreds were represented in the Department of Education and Culture by the House of Representatives; whites were represented in the Department of Education and Culture by the House of Assembly; Asians were represented in the Department of Education and Culture by the House of Delegates; and the Africans were represented in the Department of Education and Training by a white representative appointed by the government and referred to as the "Africans Own Representative". Hence, Africans were the only group in the nation, without members of their own race representing them in the Tri-Cameral government of South Africa.

The departments of education and culture focused on providing broad based educational opportunities to their stakeholders. On the other hand, the charge to the department of education and training was to provide, for the most part, minimal education to the Africans so that they would be able to carry out functions of servitude for their European overseers. As the architect of apartheid, Dr. Hendrix Verwoerd said; "Africans need only minimum education so they will be able to serve their masters. They are not capable of higher levels of learning."

With this mandate from the architect of "Apartheid" and President of the country, higher education institutions for Africans were not developed in the broad areas of the population of the Republic of South Africa (RSA). The exception was where missionary schools were developed by church organizations. However, the then four "Independent Homelands"; Bophuthatswana, Ciski, Venda, and Transkei, as well as the "Six Self Governing Homelands" set out to develop their own institutions of higher learning inspite of the attitude of the ruling government. Thus, RSA functioned with its fifteen (15) different departments of education including a Department of National Education and separate systems of higher education throughout the era of "Apartheid"; 1948 to 1994. This simply meant inequality in educational opportunities, both financial and in the development of the RSA's human resources.

As if these inequities were not enough, the National Party decided that the medium of instruction in all of the primary and secondary institutions would be "Afrikaans" the language of the Boer farmers. This would enhance the indigenous Africans' ability to communicate with the masters, as the Boers saw themselves. Africans rejected this concept and refused to attend schools where English and other indigenous languages were not utilized in the classroom. Hence, the development of the now renowned "Uprisings of the 1950s, 60s and 70s against the so called "Bantu Education Act" and other repressive laws which were promulgated by the Nationalist Party. The results for millions of Black Africans were poor education at all levels; unemployment, underemployment and a generation of poorly trained people for the advent of democracy to which everyone looked forward. In fact, because of this tremendous void in educational

pursuits, the children, (now adults) of the era of education stay aways are often referred to as "The Lost Generation". Millions are without salable skills and are woefully undereducated.

The gap in formal education was bridged by a number of non-governmental organizations through the development of a variety of non-formal programs of differing quality and content. These efforts proved to be a stop gap measure until better days appeared. Also, the self governing and independent homelands were a source of education for many persons who chose to leave their homes and pursue education elsewhere in the RSA.

By the time of the elections of 1992 and 1994 which ushered in the era of democratic rule for the RSA, the projected illiteracy rate was above 50%. The poorly equipped Black colleges and universities were simply holding on to carry out the best education possible under the circumstances. In some instances the quality of education given the Africans was very good, given the educational climate in the country. Conversely, some institutions were not adequately equipped to conduct high quality education programs.

By the time of the release of President Nelson Mandela from prison, in 1990, some of the historically white institutions had begun to admit select Black students into certain programs. This effort was often fortified by the infusion of international funds into the development of "Academic Support Programs" at institutions that resisted the tide of apartheid and enrolled Black students. At least this provided opportunities for some of the high talented Black students. On the other hand, thousands of youngsters were

still deprived of educational experiences beyond the secondary school level.

Perhaps the most significant actions which began to stimulate the RSA toward seriously considering an early movement toward a changed system of higher education, prior to the 1994 elections, were the 1991 National Workshop on Community Colleges in South Africa; the 1992 Broederstrom Education Conference where the then Vice Chancellor of the University of the Western Cape, Professor Jakes Gerwel called for educationists in the RSA to immediately begin preparing practical programs which would prepare South Africans to pursue educational equality and strong skills development for the envisioned new democratic government; and the 1991-92 USAID funded "Community College Feasibility Study", in Natal and the Transvaal that recommended the development of community colleges in the RSA.

It was at the Broederstrom Education Conference that educationists concluded and recommended that;

1. All people, children, youths and adults should have access to all levels of education;

2. ~There should be special emphasis on redress, particularly among historically disadvantaged groups such as Blacks, the disabled, women, the unemployed and populations in rural communities;

3. There must be flexibility in the different formal and non-formal education sectors to allow mobility between the worlds of work and education, as well as among different types of education and training;

4. Nationally determined standards must ensure that the design of the various education courses in both the formal and non-formal sectors must be such that they will be recognized by employers and other education and training institutions.

The USAID decided, following its feasibility study, that farther investigation into the community college concept as a prospect for enhancing the development of the human resources in RSA was a worthwhile venture. Hence, the funding of the National Investigation into Community Education (NICE). NICE, then, continues until this day, to provide leadership for further development of community education generally, and the community college concept specifically.

Community College development in the RSA has an up hill battle to become a meaningful partner in tertiary education. The history of tertiary institutions has been to maintain a highly selective process in admitting students into technikon and university studies. Therefore, the concept of open access is likely to meet with resistance from some of the leaders in higher education.

The highly controversial "Matriculation Examination," Similar to the SAT and Act in the United States, has been used to exclude rather than include many of that nation's potential young scholars. Also, there is, at this time,

no formally constructed concept of articulation among the various institutions of higher education. The community college entrance onto the higher education scene without such a system is problematic for its leaders and the students who choose the community college as a route for furthering their education. Nevertheless, it appears that help is on the way.

With the opening of Funda Community College (FCC) in the Fall of 1995 as the first American style community college in the RSA, pressure began to be placed on all levels of government to take seriously the concept of community college education. The FCC effort, funded jointly by the Joint Education Trust, the USAID and the Kagiso Trust, added a new dimension to the higher education scene in the RSA. The national minister of education has indicated support for community college development. With this nod from the national office, several of the Provincial Ministers have begun to take the leadership role in rationalizing community college development and implementation.

At this point it is necessary to indicate that private and non-governmental organizations have been working on community college development for the last five years. At this point they have not been able to crack the barriers that exist at the technikon and university levels in terms of a standardized system of articulation. Individual universities and technikons have indicated an interest in seeking relationships with the well-designed community colleges that have developed strong academic programs. However, the universities and technikons are basically controlled by

senates and councils of the old school of thought and until now no written articulation agreements have been signed with RSA tertiary institutions.

The Community College Association of South Africa is impotent in dealing with the issues related to articulation because of a lack of strong, well educated (formal education beyond the undergraduate level) leadership. There is also an absence of any continuity or similarity of program designs among its 30 members. This position could be strengthened if a number of the teacher training colleges and technical colleges are transformed into community colleges. There is a strong advocacy for such a movement. However, many of the leaders in these institutions fear the loss of prestige and status if they should become two year institutions. Further, the mission, role and scope of their present institutions would have to be modified substantially. Additionally, some of the Rectors, Faculty and political leaders who control the technical and teacher training colleges are hesitant to change because of the unknown future that is presently associated with the community college.

During 1995, the College Sector Coalition, comprising more than 200 members met with the National Minister of Education in an effort to get support from the ministry for the development of an implementation plan which would lead to the creation of a College Sector Act. If such an act could be passed through the Parliament, the institutions found in this new sector would have a well defined college nomenclature and could enjoy the same autonomy and status as do the technikons and universities.

To bring together such a cohesive program of institutional operations is an almost insurmountable task given the diversity of the colleges which make up "The College Coalition". Also, the task of getting the variety of colleges to develop and adher to a community governance concept would mean a major change from their present structure.

As the College Coalition takes on the task of facilitating the necessary agreements in order to meet the vast needs of the people of South Africa, beyond the university and technikon mould, other changes have already taken place in the education arena.

The Technikons have been given authority to grant degrees in certain programs and several institutions have begun to plan for that eventuality. Meanwhile the National Qualification Framework (NQF) has been passed by the Parliament, thereby laying the groundwork for national standards to be rationalized and facilitated by the South African Qualification Agency (SAQA) for all levels of education. This is the first development toward establishing an independent accrediting agency in the RSA.

The NQF when fully functional will oversee the establishment of the SAQA. This new agency will set national standards which ensure national portability and progression of credits and qualifications within the NQF; and will monitor, review and advise the Minister of Education on matters affecting the provision, registration, and achievement of standards and qualifications.

When these agencies are up and operating, community colleges can be set in a proper position in the higher education stratum. Such a structure should ensure appropriate articulation and recognition of work completed by community college students. Until this process is completed, community colleges will have to continue negotiating a variety of articulation structures with the teacher training colleges, technikons, and universities.

A bright spot at the Provincial level is the initiative of the Minister of Education in the Gauteng Province to establish a "Committee for Community College Development". This is significant because Gauteng is the province within which Johannesburg is located and the rest of the country is likely to follow this lead. Meanwhile, one must not overlook the efforts of Kwa-Zulu- Natal in its efforts to establish a strong presence for community college education. This is the province within which Durban, the RSA's largest and deepest seaport, on the Indian Ocean, is located and traditionally this has been an area of growth and change within the RSA. This region also houses many of South Africa's major industries which are not directly linked to diamond and gold fields. In addition, there are a number of initiatives on community college education evolving in other provinces. Help is needed from countries which have community colleges if these efforts are to be successful.

There are presently a National Commission on Higher Education (HCHE); a National Commission on Further Education; a Community Education and Training Bill and several other pieces of proposed legislation. These concepts are expected to be debated and acted upon during the upcoming

Parliamentary session and later during 1996. These proposals are intended to facilitate a smoother transition from the ordinary school through the various levels of formal education including the community colleges, teacher training colleges, regional training centers, technical colleges, technikons and the universities.

The question here is; Where does the prospect for involvment of American colleges and universities, as well as business entities lie amid all of these national and local activities to rationalize and overhaul the education system of South Africa?

The answers are not simplistic. However, the involvement of American businesses and institutions of higher education could be very timely at this moment in the development of the new education dispensation in the RSA.

Consider for a moment the following problems the RSA faces in education which need resolution:

1. The RSA needs to establish funding concepts which can ensure the sustainability of its educational institutions on into the future.

2. The teacher training colleges are at a crossroad and must get sound guidance on their future directions. There are 102 teacher training colleges strewn throughout the RSA. Most are located in the former homelands and self governing territories. Since the inception of Democratic rule and the abolition of segregated institutional concepts, some

of these colleges are likely to take on a different mission, role and scope. If this transformation does not take place within the next two years, these institutions are likely to vanish for lack of financial and or human resource support.

3. The technical colleges which number 129 are searching for a new meaning and use as the broad community seeks a different kind of education and training. Some of these institutions will convert to community colleges and will need sound guidance on how to modify the mission statement and make it congruent with the concepts of community college education.

4. The strategies for operating the whole of higher education must be reconstructed to include well thoughout articulation concepts which will not seemingly impune the academic character of the technikons and universities. At the same time, however, all segments of higher education must develop solid articulation relationships to enhance the mobility of students within institutions as well as among the institutions of higher education.

5. The concept of an over supply of teachers for the ordinary schools continue to be amplified. However, Jane Hofmeyr, noted education researcher at the National Business Initiative, outlines a number of considerations which should be given to teacher training before the process of eradicating teacher training colleges begin. They are as follows:

* There must be a reconfiguration of some institutions.

* New models of preservice must be developed.

* Consideration must be given to the use of the distance education mode in future teaching processes.

* New curricula must be designed with new concepts of strengthening the content areas.

* Proper use of modern technology for teaching purposes must be inculcated into the minds of the academic leaders.

6. The present community colleges like FUNDA at Soweto and others, need technical assistance and sound guidance in their future development. It is during this process that American business and educational leaders input would be welcomed.

Americans should begin developing collaboratives among businesses, industries, universities and colleges which have similar interests and energy for development in the Republic of South Africa. The latter concept is as important as the former. In other words, Interest without energy will leave you frustrated and unsuccessful. On the other hand, high energy without well thoughout innovations and initiatives will also leave you

frustrated and unsuccessful. The effort, then, should be a plan of action which has been agreed upon by all parties to the initiative/s. Canned successess are not likely to fit the bill for the RSA scene. South Africa is presently a world stage and people and institutions from every imaginable area of the globe are trying to find ways to put together their better mouse trap within the Republic.

Greed is also a part of the motive for involvement in many instances. Many capable and normally honest professionals are getting caught up in the syndrome of how much money is there for me and/or my business or institution if we become involved. Don't let selfish motives be the factors which stimulate you to make the move to assist the RSA in finding its place in the new world order. Be honest with your level of desire to participate in a truely exciting human endeavor to change the quality of life for millions of people or stay home.

When you choose South Africa as your work station for educational and human development, the only return for your efforts might well be the satisfaction of knowing that you made a significant contribution where and when it really mattered. Your children and grandchildren will be proud of your contributions in the future and the present and future leaders of South Africa will be happy that you took the time to care. It is an awesome task that must not be over looked and it requires a great deal of dedication, determination and discipline to get the job done.

The Republic of South Africa is one of the last frontiers where human suffering and indignation have been perpetrated upon a people because of

their race. The people who were the oppressed, with your help, fought back and won some important ground. The divestment of colleges, universities and certain businesses and industries, and the passage of the Congressional Anti-Apartheid Act helped to change the direction of human suffering and opression in South Africa. It is now time to re-invest and get involved in the development of "Human Capital". The largest strip of ground is yet to be gained. But it will not be accomplished unless and until the human resources of that nation are properly developed and the indigenous people of that land are able to control their own destiny.

These are challenges of great magnitude and funds are available for those who are creative, innovative and sound of heart. USAID and its Tertiary Education Linkages Program; the Support for Tertiary Education Program; USIS and its academic specialist programs; the faculty and student exchange programs; Fulbright Scholars initiative; the presence of the Ford Foundation and an array of other funding sources are available to be tapped. There are also local funding sources in South Africa. The Reconstruction and Development Program; the Joint Education Trust; and other programs are beckoning for you to come. It is not easy, but this is your chance to help lay a path for the ongoing development and empowerment of the people of South Africa. The path on which people of South Africa must walk in order to truely join hands in love, respect and the building of a new nation, is education. Americans have walked it and you have the compass and the map for successful development, use them and we'll all be better off for your efforts.

Good day and good luck.

A paper delivered by

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Department of Educational Leadership, during the

1996 Conference on "Investing in South Africa"

Costa Mesa, California

March 19, 1996
Note: Professor Smith was the team leader for the USAID funded "Feasibility Study for Community College Development" and was the Founding Rector of Funda Community College in Soweto